



**CITY OF DURHAM**  
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## News Release

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## Durham Hosts Human Relations Awards Ceremony April 28

*Nominations Sought by April 15; Nomination Form [Now Available Online](#)*

DURHAM, N.C. –The City of Durham Human Relations Commission is now seeking nominations of residents who have distinguished themselves by contributing their time and talents to promoting good human relations in Durham.

In honor of National Fair Housing Month, the Human Relations Commission and the Human Relations Division of the City's Neighborhood Improvement Department are hosting the Human Relations Commission Award Ceremony on Thursday, April 28 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Holton Career and Resource Center, 401 N. Driver St., Durham.

At this ceremony, at least four Durham residents will be honored for improving human relations. The four award categories are as follows and [nominations](#) are due by 5 p.m. on Friday, April 15:

- **Carlie B. Sessoms Award** — the highest and most coveted award to an individual or organization that has made a major impact on improving human relations. This award commemorates contributions of the late Carlie B. Sessoms, a Durham native who served as chair of the Human Relations Commission and played a major role in improving human relations locally and nationally.
- **Housing Award** — recognizes an individual or organization for outstanding efforts in promoting fair housing with emphasis on the economic, social and/or political impact in the community that has encouraged diversity and housing opportunities for all.
- **Human Rights Award** — presented to a local, state, or federal lawmaker who has successfully supported or promoted human rights causes and issues.

- **Human Rights Youth Award** — presented to an individual or group of individuals under the age of 18 for demonstrating an understanding of, and commitment to, human relations in Durham.

In addition to honoring Durham residents in four award categories, the ceremony will also feature a keynote presentation by [G. Douglas Jones](#), a founding partner and lawyer with the [Jones & Hawley P.C.](#) in Birmingham, Ala., who led a team of prosecutors in the re-opened case of the 1963 Ku Klux Klan bombing of the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, which resulted in the deaths of four young girls.

The ceremony is free and open to the public with refreshments immediately following the conclusion of the program. For more information, contact Human Relations Manager Delilah Donaldson by [email](#) or at (919) 560-4107, ext. 34277.

### **About the Human Relations Division in the City of Durham Neighborhood Improvement Services Department**

The [Neighborhood Improvement Services Department](#) works to preserve and improve quality of life conditions for Durham residents, and to encourage active participation in neighborhood redevelopment and public policy and decision making dialogue. The department's [Human Relations Division](#) strives to improve race and human relations in the City by working to eliminate housing discrimination and by prioritizing community outreach and educational activities to meet the needs of Durham's residents. The division is responsible for enforcement of the City of Durham Fair Housing Ordinance and the federal Fair Housing Act. HUD provides funding annually for the Division to investigate housing complaints in the City of Durham that allege discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex (gender), religion, national origin, physical or mental handicap or familial status (families with children). The Human Relations Division also provides oversight to the City of Durham [Human Relations Commission](#), which is comprised of 15 Durham residents who meet monthly to work on activities designed to improve human relations and promote harmony throughout Durham. The department is also responsible for enforcement of quality of life ordinances and state statutes including the City's Minimum Housing Code; Nonresidential Code; Weedy Lot, Abandoned & Junk Vehicle ordinances; and the State of North Carolina's Unsafe Building Statute. The department's rapid responders, known as the Impact Team, remediate non-compliant housing properties; abate public nuisances, such as litter, graffiti, illegal dumping, and abandoned shopping carts; and conduct

neighborhood service projects. The department's Community Engagement staff provides outreach and education to Durham residents and community organizations. Guided by the City's [Strategic Plan](#), the department helps ensure that Durham has thriving, livable neighborhoods by providing the highest quality of services to engage and educate the community, eradicating blight, ensuring safer neighborhoods and enhancing neighborhood revitalization.

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